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“Why the Beauty Shouldn’t Just Be Skin Deep”

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Patients frequently ask me which skin creams to use to keep their skin looking young and healthy. I usually follow up that question with the comment that it’s more important for them to know what foods would help them achieve a higher quality of skin health. Without a diet that effectively provides nutrients for healthy cellular functioning, even highly effective skin creams will be limited in its ability to provide us with optimum skin vitality.

While it is important to use SPF for sun protection and to use skin creams and lotions that provide antioxidant activity, it is more important to consume a diet that is consistently abundant in antioxidants and minerals. No amount of expensive high quality skin creams can make up for the negative impact of a consistently pro-inflammatory unhealthy diet as far as its impact on overall skin health. Our skin is our largest organ and it frequently reflects the state of our health. The vitality and glow of our skin is usually optimized when we are consistently consuming a diet full of antioxidants, minerals, phytonutrients, and water.

The reason these foods lead to healthy glowing skin is because they provide the fundamental building blocks for cellular activity. When we eat an anti-inflammatory diet, which is a mostly plant-based diet, it provides us the necessary elements for cells to function optimally and provides the antioxidants necessary to counteract oxidative stress; which leads to break down of collagen and prevents effective cellular regeneration.

There are three easy tips I frequently pass along to my patients to help them decide if they are eating enough of an anti-inflammatory diet to help maximize healthy skin:

1. Make sure that the foods you consume comprise the colors of the rainbow. This will take the guess work out of trying to figure out whether your diet encompasses enough phytonutrients, minerals, vitamins, and antioxidants to achieve the best skin you were born to have. By eating a diet that contains vegetables and fruits of various colors, you are naturally consuming a wide gamut of these nutrients.

2. Make sure the foods you are eating looks like it could have recently come off a tree or off the ground. In other words, make sure you are eating foods that are not processed, are plant-based, and most closely resembling its natural form.

3. Make sure to stay hydrated either with water or green/white/oolong teas. Since water is necessary for efficient cellular activity, you need to ensure that you are getting adequate amounts of this on a daily basis. If you are worried about caffeine in teas, the level of caffeine in these teas is much less than coffee; and the minerals, antioxidants and vitamins you get in them are more than worth it for long term vitality and glow of your skin and overall health.

So, in order to make sure that the money you are spending on high quality skincare isn't going to waste, please keep in mind that you need to feed your skin from the inside out, as well as, from the outside in. As the largest organ of our body, the health of our skin significantly reflects our overall health. And the inverse of that is true as well—if your diet is toxic to your health, that toxicity will also be reflected in the state of your skin.

By understanding the concept that the beauty of our skin is not just skin deep, but rather is a reflection of our deep rooted underlying status of overall health, I hope that these tips can help you to maximize the effectiveness of your skin care regimen. By eating an anti-inflammatory diet as well as using an antioxidant skin care regimen, you will be able to provide your skin cells with all the essential nutrients it needs to help you glow from the inside out.